

A Unique Encounter and Career Reaffirmed

As I walked to attend my first New York College of Podiatric Medicine's (NYCPM) Student National Podiatric Medical Association's foot screening event, I had no idea what to expect and felt incredibly nervous. On one hand, I worried about my inexperience and how it would affect my interaction with the patients. But, on the other hand, I was so excited and could not stop smiling because I could finally put my knowledge to use.

As I rushed to our station, the feeling of nervousness and excitement became even more exhilarating. I received a very friendly greeting by the attending physician and my colleagues. After listening to the instructions for how to perform a foot screening, I was really shocked at the simplicity of the process. I had imagined that I would only be capable of filling out paperwork, but surprisingly, I found myself checking for pulses, neurological function, and learning how to identify whether or not a patient is a diabetic.

After some time passed, we received a really interesting case. An older woman between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five approached our station for a foot screening. I eagerly offered to help one of the upper-classman as they performed the foot screening. We first identified a small ulcer, which the patient expressed was painful, on the fourth digit of her right foot. Both her feet were dry, cracked, and exhibited an absence of pulses and onychomycosis. She also had a severe case of pitting edema and a discoloration on the left lower extremity that indicated reduced blood flow. At the end of our foot screening, we identified that the patient had peripheral vascular disease and recommended that she pursue further examination at our school's foot clinic.

As I watched my first patient leave our station, I felt absolutely grateful but extremely sorry. I was grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in such an interesting case where my acquired knowledge was put to use to help another person. At the same time, I also felt extremely sorry for this patient. Maybe it was because she seemed to be fragile and very unaware of the condition of her lower extremities or maybe it was because she seemed concerned at her initial diagnosis and her need to seek further care at the foot clinic. At the end of the day, my experience with this patient definitely reaffirmed my decision to continue practicing medicine.

The sincerity I observed from every patient we screened as they thanked us was the best part of the day. Although I currently spend the majority of my days and nights embedded in my books, I realized that every second of studying is worth it so that I can continue to provide optimum care for any patient that seeks my services.



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